What is claimed is:

1. A method of treating a material comprising red blood cells, the method comprising,

a) adding a compound to the material comprising red blood cells in order to inactivate a pathogen, if present in the material, the compound comprising a functional group which is, or which forms, an electrophilic group, wherein the electrophilic group can react covalently with nucleic acid; and

b) adding a quencher to the material comprising red blood cells in order to reduce the level of side reactions of the compound, wherein the quencher comprises a nucleophilic group that can react covalently with the electrophilic group, wherein the addition of the quencher is done prior to, simultaneously with, or within about 20 minutes after the addition of the compound, and wherein the compound inactivates at least about 1 log of the pathogen.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the electrophilic group is cationic.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the electrophilic group is selected from the group consisting of an aziridine and an aziridinium ion.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the method comprises treating the material with the compound and the quencher *in vitro*.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the method comprises treating the material with the compound and the quencher *ex vivo*.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the functional group is a mustard group that is capable of reacting *in situ* to form the electrophilic group.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the compound comprises a nucleic acid binding ligand.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the nucleic acid binding ligand is selected from the group consisting of furocoumarins, furocoumarin derivatives,

acridines and acridine derivatives; and wherein the functional group is a mustard group.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the compound inactivates at least about 3 logs of the pathogen.

10. The method of claim 7, wherein the nucleic acid binding ligand is a polyamine and wherein the electrophilic group is selected from the group consisting of an aziridine and an aziridinium ion.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the nucleophilic group is a thiol.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the treating of the material comprising red blood cells comprises incubation with the material comprising red blood cells, the compound and the quencher for at least about 1 to 48 hours.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein on addition of the compound and the quencher, the concentration of the compound in the material comprising red blood cells is about 0.1 μM to about 5 mM.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein on addition of the compound and the quencher, the concentration of the compound in the material comprising red blood cells is about 50 μM to about 500 μM.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein on addition of the compound and the quencher, the molar ratio of quencher:compound is in the range of 100:1 to 1:1.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the molar ratio of quencher:compound is in the range of about 50:1 to 1:1.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein the addition of the quencher is done prior to or simultaneously with the addition of the compound.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the compound comprises a nucleic acid binding ligand.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the nucleic acid binding ligand is selected from the group consisting of furocoumarins, furocoumarin derivatives,

acridines and acridine derivatives; and wherein the functional group is a mustard group.

20. The method of claim 17, wherein the nucleic acid binding ligand is a polyamine and wherein the electrophilic group is selected from the group consisting of an aziridine and an aziridinium ion.